

Bayou Bourbeux Watershed

St. Landry Parish, Louisiana

The Bayou Bourbeux Watershed encompasses approximately 81,500 acres in southwest St. Landry Parish, Louisiana. It is a multi-purpose project developed to focus on four key components: urban flooding; sheet, rill and gully erosion; channel maintenance; and wildlife habitat restoration.



Solutions

The goal of the project is to increase the health of the Bayou Bourbeux ecosystems, protect the health and welfare of urban residents within the City of Opelousas, and protect the productive capacity of highly erodible farmlands. The urban protection component of the project focuses on an economically depressed area of Opelousas. Approximately thirty-two residences in this area of Opelousas are receiving damages inside their homes under a 25-year storm event. Another eight residences are receiving damages to vehicles and other portions of the housing structure. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) proposes to concrete 7,600 feet of Bayou Yarbor in order to contain the 100-year flood. Other flood protecting measures such as a protection levee will be installed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit has been received to implement the urban flood measures and for the 11 miles of channel restoration.

Partners

The diversity of problems within the watershed necessitated the need for numerous public and private partners in defining problems and alternatives. Besides the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the partners involved in this watershed include: the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, St. Landry Soil and Water Conservation District, City of Opelousas, six Gravity Drainage Districts and Southern Development Foundation.

Consultation on this project has been with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

Two individuals with the Southern Development Foundation are Earth Team volunteers and have assisted with outreach efforts and gathering data for the project.



Costs

The estimated federal funds that are needed to construct the urban flood protection measures are \$4.5 million. Approximately \$600,000 will be needed from the local sponsors for the cost of bridge replacements associated with the flood protection. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development has allocated \$285,000 for 11 miles of channel restoration in the lower extremities of the watershed for fiscal year 2000. For the land treatment phase of the project, \$373,300 has been expended to date. Environmental Justice funds in the amount of \$25,000 have been expended for outreach efforts and conducting meetings in the area.

Most concerns associated with this project were addressed during the development of the watershed plan and the environmental assessment. Both the watershed plan and the environmental assessment are in full compliance with the National Environmental Planning Assessment (NEPA). After a public review process, NRCS and the local sponsors received a 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allowing urban flood protection work and 11 miles of channel restoration. NRCS is continuing to address concerns as they arise.

Concerns